

Antonakos, Mike

From: Joshua Wrinn <jwrinn9@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 1, 2022 7:00 PM
To: LABTestimony; Rep. Borer, Dorinda
Subject: HB 5251

To whom it my concern,

I am writing you in regards to HB 5251. This bill covers dispatchers from portal to portal for worker's compensation. Currently, this is offered to other emergency responders (police, fire, ems), but not dispatchers.

This bill is very important. Regardless of any situation, dispatchers still have to come into work. The 911 phones still ring, the responders still need to know where they are going, and someone needs to be there on the other end of the radio when responders call for help. Weather it's a sunny day out, a blizzard, or it's hurricane Sandy, dispatchers still have to respond to work their shift. While it may be a state of emergency outside and the news is telling everyone to remain indoors, it's dangerous outside, and the roads are closed. Dispatchers still have to get in their car and drive to work.

During shifts like these, dispatchers have a choice to make. Either kiss their kids, buckle their seatbelt, and drive to work with white knuckles the whole way while worrying that if something happens to themselves or their property (vehicle) on the way to work, it's on their dollar. OR, with no other choice or risk involved, call out of work. The second choice of the two almost sounds like a no brainer. Problem is, this is not how most dispatchers work. We will come in no matter what, because that's the job we signed up for. The other problem is, when people do call out, it causes a major staff issue. Again, the phones still ring, people still need help, and the radio still needs to get answered. If no one shows up to work, who's going to do it? I'm Norwalk, other dispatchers get mandated to stay, but there can be times where dispatchers have already been working 16 or 24 hours due to this issue. In that case, officers will have to be mandated to come off the road where they are needed to work the radio. This also doesn't fix the issue, because officers are not state certified to answer 911 calls, and officers are not trained and don't know how to dispatch EMS and FD calls. It becomes a major issue.

This bill shouldn't just cover emergency situations like storms, but everyday shifts. Just like officers, firefighters, and EMS are covered portal to portal, dispatchers should be too. Again, no matter the situation, we are still needed. We are THE FIRST first responder. We should be covered just like the other responders are.

I feel very strongly about this. If you have any questions and want to speak further on this, please feel free to contact me anytime

Respectfully,

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